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MARKETING OF UNIVERSITY LIBRARY INFORMATION RESOURCES AS DETERMINANT OF USE BY POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS IN BENUE STATE

Phoebe Apinega
Dr David Aju
Tersoo Aloysius Kpughur
Jeffrey Pira-Gbande
Benue State University, Makurdi

Abstract
The study investigated marketing of university library information resources as determinant of use by postgraduate students in universities in Benue State. Three research questions and three hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. Descriptive survey research method was adopted for the study and a targeted population of 96 postgraduate students registered library users of the three universities under study (JOSTUM, BSUM and University of Mkar), hence the entire population was used as the sample size because it was manageable and small using census sampling procedure. Data was collected using a self-structured questionnaire and analyzed using descriptive statistics of Percentage, Mean and Standard Deviation to answer the research questions, while chi-square was employed to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The result indicated that the purposes for marketing university library information resources among others include to promote the use of library information resources; strategies for marketing includes exhibitions and display of new arrivals, use of leaflets and posters in public places among others; and information resources in the libraries such as textbooks, journals, indexes, abstracts, newspapers among others are to a great extent are utilized. Based on the findings, the study recommended among others that University libraries should provide information resources such as knowledge and resource sharing and other information services.
Keywords: Information resources, marketing, strategies of marketing, utilization, postgraduate students

Introduction

The success of university libraries in catering information resources to the academic needs of postgraduate students hinges significantly on the effectiveness of their marketing strategies. A well-crafted and targeted marketing approach not only raises awareness about the diverse and valuable resources available but also influences postgraduate students' perceptions and attitudes toward utilizing these resources (Dwivedi et al., 2021). The significant role of the library in the education of a society, especially, in institutions of higher learning like universities where information materials (prints and non-prints) are required for teaching, learning and research purposes depends largely on marketing strategies.

For libraries and information services to stay viable, they must adopt marketing strategies to help meet organizational mission, goals and objectives. Without marketing strategies, a high-tech library or information service would not necessarily be successful (Olorunfemi et al., 2018). Also, with increased competition in the world of information, marketing is a factor for survival. Survival of a university library depends among other things on its image in the minds of the users and its parent institutions. Chibueze (2022) opined that the idea of marketing library and information products and services is very new. Library and information products are now known as commodities and it can be sold, exchanged, and transmitted.

Generally, marketing is the activity and process of creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers. In the context of library and information science, marketing involves promoting the value and benefits of information resources and services to potential users (Millie, 2020). It is a multidimensional socioeconomic discipline that focuses on individual and organizational collaboration to identify and satisfy the needs of clients (Dwivedi et al., 2021). It involves identifying the information needs and wants of a target user, and then developing and promoting library resources or services that meet those needs and desires. Libraries are not always focused on producing new products, but sometimes old products are repackaged and promoted in diverse places or for a fresh section of patrons.

Understanding the purpose of marketing is very important hence when the purpose of something is not known abuse is inevitable. In a larger context, purpose is the reason for which something exists or is performed. It is the intended goal, aim, or end result of a task or action. The main goal of marketing library resources is to promote and raise awareness of the value and importance of the library's resources (Osinulu, et al. 2018). Marketing of library resources and services increases awareness and motivates students. Canzoneri (2015) noted that library marketing is vital to keeping users and potential users informed and educated about the resources and services that match their needs and interests. One can therefore conclude that the purpose of marketing library information resources is to foster user engagement, improve utilization of library resources, and cultivate a positive and supportive relationship between the library and its patrons, ultimately contributing to the institution's academic and educational goals. To effectively achieve the purposes of marketing, libraries have to bring in different innovative products and employ different marketing strategies to reach their patrons globally and adequately.

Marketing strategy outlines goals, competitors, and value for clients. A strategy can be defined as a comprehensive declaration of objectives set by an individual or an organization, representing a forward-thinking and enduring plan with the overarching aim of attaining a sustainable competitive advantage (Black et al., 2023). Osinulu et al. (2022) described marketing strategy as a plan of action designed to achieve the stated goals of promoting a library product or service to its users. In the context of this study, therefore, marketing strategies involve a systematic and purposeful approach to promote library resources and programmes to postgraduate students. These strategies aim to

increase awareness, usage, and overall engagement with the library's offerings by effectively communicating the value and relevance of its resources and services. Marketing efforts may include digital and traditional channels, outreach events, collaborations with academic departments, and the creation of user-friendly promotional materials. Libraries produced some materials as techniques for promoting their resources and services. They include brochures, flyers, library e-mail, library websites, reading lists, bibliographies, Newsletters, posters (Otuu & Unegbu, 2022).

The utilization of library information resources in academic libraries is closely tied to marketing strategies. Library users are considered as individuals benefiting from library materials for their purposes (Ani et al., 2023). These encompass both internal and external users in university settings. Internal users include undergraduates, postgraduates, lecturers, research fellows, and other members of the tertiary institution, while external users are served under specific arrangements. According to Uche, et al (2018), user satisfaction is a paramount goal for libraries, as highlighted by the importance of positive user experiences with library resources, and organizations. User satisfaction is an intrapersonal response influenced by interactions with resources, brands, products, and services. There are different types of users in an academic library. However, the study is delimited with postgraduate students of the study area.

Postgraduate students are those who have completed an undergraduate degree and are pursuing advanced. A postgraduate is a student who has finished their undergraduate degree at a college or university and is now pursuing further education at a more advanced level. (Grifith-College, 2024). The study ascertained the purpose of marketing university library information resources, evaluated the strategies of marketing university library information resources and ascertained the extent of use of university library information resources in universities in Benue State.

Statement of the Problem

In the evolving landscape of university libraries shaped by rapid advancements in media technologies, changing user preferences, and financial constraints, marketing strategies have become crucial for library and information science professionals to position themselves effectively within the information superhighways. The competitive environment, marked by alternative information providers like the internet, necessitates a proactive approach in promoting university library resources such as journals, books, and manuscripts. Despite significant investments in acquisition and processing, certain university libraries in Benue State observed a lack of marketing efforts, potentially contributing to low patronage and underutilization of resources. Notably, postgraduate students seem to be particularly affected, with limited awareness of available resources leading them to seek information from alternative sources, resulting in subpar academic performance and a higher likelihood of dropping out. Recognizing the importance of marketing in creating awareness and enhancing resource utilization, this study aims to investigate the role of marketing in determining the use of university library information resources by postgraduate students in Benue State universities.

Objectives of the Study

The general purpose of this study is to investigate marketing of university library information resources as determinant of use by post graduate students in Benue State Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. ascertain the purpose of marketing university library information resources in Benue State
2. evaluate the strategies of marketing university library information resources in Benue State.
3. ascertain the extent of use of university library information resources in universities in Benue State.

Research Questions

The following research questions are formulated to guide the study:

1. What is the purpose of marketing university library information resources in Benue State?
2. What are the strategies of marketing university library information resources in Benue State?
3. What is the extent of use of university library information resources as a determinant of use in universities in Benue State?

Hypotheses

The following research hypotheses were formulated to guide the study:

Ho1: Marketing of university library resources does not significantly determine use of university library resources by postgraduate students

Ho2: Availability of marketing university resources does not significantly determine the use of university library resources by postgraduate students.

Ho3: Marketing of university library information resources do not significantly improve PG students use of library resources

Review of Related Literature

Purpose of Marketing University Library Information Resources

The success of students is heavily reliant on the accessibility of information resources, enabling them to conduct research efficiently. The marketing of library information resources plays a crucial role in creating awareness among students and facilitating their acquisition of knowledge for academic pursuits (Nkechi & Ajakaye, 2022). According to Soulen (2021), a well-stocked library with diverse information resources encourages students to make extensive use of these resources, ultimately contributing to improved academic performance. Conversely, a lack of marketing strategies for information resources can lead to poor academic outcomes, leaving students underprepared and potentially incompetent compared to their peers who have embraced library marketing principles.

In the context of university libraries, marketing extends beyond mere financial transactions. Modern marketing in libraries involves proactive and user-oriented planning, organizing, dissemination, and control of information resources to ensure user satisfaction while achieving organizational objectives (Ezeh, 2021). Rohit and Ashish (2016) emphasize that marketing is an essential stance focused on meeting user needs and integrating libraries into the evolving global culture. Madhusudhan (2012) highlights two primary roles of marketing in libraries: achieving library goals and satisfying user needs. This involves promoting the use of information resources, creating a perception of need, optimizing information use, enhancing the library's image, addressing rising costs, and coping with the challenges of the information explosion. Arumuru (2023) underscores that the main purpose of marketing library and information resources is to understand and fulfill users' needs, emphasizing the importance of effective service delivery through continuous assessment and strategic marketing approaches.

Strategies of Marketing University Library Information Resources to Postgraduate Students

Marketing strategy involves a comprehensive definition of an organization's products, services, and positions. It includes the identification of target markets, assessment of internal and external relationships, and the establishment of general business goals (Schulkind, 2022). Nadir et al (2022) describes this as the organizational plan of action intended to move the organization towards achieving both short-term and long-term goals. A marketing plan is then crafted as a specific roadmap to guide the organization in attaining these goals. This involves determining the direction and scope over long-term objectives, incorporating the vision, mission, and goals of the organization. The strategy aims to gain an advantage through the optimal use of resources in a challenging environment to meet market needs and stakeholder expectations.

Several studies have delved into strategies for marketing library services. Ukwoma (2014) identified communication skills, face-to-face interactions, networking, seminars, workshops, newsletters, advertisements, and website utilization as crucial for effective marketing. Benson et al. (2016) highlighted the dominance of strategies such as library notice boards, face-to-face interactions, seminars, institutional websites, and networking in marketing library resources in tertiary institutions. Abimbola and Affiong (2020) emphasized the evolving role of libraries, focusing on promotional techniques like brochures, flyers, websites, workshops, seminars, library displays, exhibitions, and social media integration. Additionally, Odine (2011) proposed strategies like creating web pages, sending emails, attending academic lectures, and providing help services. Aderibigbe and Farouk (2017) emphasized strategies like publicity, public relations, notice board postings, image enhancement, user orientation, training programs, advertising, newsletters, and personal sales. Baro and Ebhomeya (2013) conducted an empirical study on Nigerian university libraries, revealing various strategies including orientation talks, workshops, library instruction, bulletins, library week, newsletters, staff meetings, and committees, with limited use of social networking sites for marketing.

Extent of Use of University Library Information Resources by Post Graduate Students

As important as the availability of information resources is, it has been observed that students are not committed to utilizing these library information resources provided for them as expected. This signifies that their level of utilization is below expectation. This situation is seen in the low daily statistics of books consulted, books borrowed by post graduate students for home use, number of books photocopied by them, number of electronic database logins and reader services monthly statistics of library users (Gupta, et al. 2013).

Joel, Nwafor-Orizu and Vandi (2020) in their study on availability and extent of use of electronic information resources by postgraduate students in Federal University Libraries in North-East Nigeria revealed that PG students to a great extent make use of electronic information resources like CD-ROM, internet, WWW and e-mails in Federal University libraries in North East, Nigeria. Similarly, Tenopir (2013) maintained that majority of the users used internet search engines, databases, full-text resources and audio visuals. Also, Bashiraminu (2016) revealed that online databases such as HINARI, AGORA, AJOL, and DOAJ were the types of electronic information resources available and utilized to a great extent in the Federal Colleges of Education Libraries in North Western State.

Research Methodology

The study adopted descriptive survey design. The population was 96 registered postgraduate students with the three university libraries under study. The breakdown showed that Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University Library has 47 registered Postgraduate students, Benue State University Library and Information Services has 16 while University of Mkar has 3 making a total of 96 postgraduate students. A total of 96 copies of questionnaire were administered to the respondents, all the 96 questionnaires representing (100%) were returned. Data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics of Percentage, Mean and Standard Deviation to answer the research questions, while chi-square was employed to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Data Analysis or Presentation

The purpose of marketing university library information resources by university libraries in Benue State

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of the Purpose of Marketing University Library Information Resources by University libraries in Benue State

Purpose of Marketing	SA	A	D	SD		*SD*	Remark
To promote the use of library information resources	63	33	-	-	3.66	.477	Agreed
Create perception and thereby enhances demand for use	38	58	-	-	3.40	.492	Agreed
Ensure optimal use of library information resources	40	54	2	-	3.40	.533	Agreed
Improve the image of librarians	29	65	2	-	3.28	.496	Agreed
Cope with the information explosion	40	52	4	-	3.38	.567	Agreed
Introduce cutting-edge information technology systems in library services	22	72	2	-	3.21	.457	Agreed
Save libraries from declining readership support	38	56	2		3.38	.528	Agreed
Encourages patronage of use of the library information resources	53	39	4		3.51	.580	Agreed
Create awareness of the availability of library information resources	46	48	2		3.46	.541	Agreed
Cluster Mean					**3.41**		**Agreed**

Table 1 shows the mean rating of the purpose of marketing university library information resources by university libraries in Benue State. From the Table, items 16-24 shows that, the respondents agreed to the above purposes for marketing university library information resources by university libraries in Benue State. This is because the mean scores of all the items are above the decision point of 2.50. Their ratings of items 16 to 24 are 3.66, 3.40, 3.40, 3.28, 3.28, 3.38, 3.21, 3.38, 3.51 and3.46 with corresponding standard deviations .477, .492, .533, .496, .567, .457, .528, .580 and .541 respectively. Based on the decision point, all the items are above the cut-off point of 2.50 and the cluster mean 3.41 which is above the cut-off point. This means that the respondents agreed to the purpose of marketing university library information resources by university libraries in Benue State. The strategies of marketing university library information resources in Benue State

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of the Strategies of Marketing University Library Information Resources in Benue State

Strategies of Marketing	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Std.	Remark
Exhibitions and display of new arrivals	67	27	2	-	3.68	.513	Agreed
Use of leaflets and posters in public places/locations	49	43	4	-	3.47	.580	Agreed
Sending out brochure or flyers to users/public	42	46	8	-	3.35	.632	Agreed
Organizing user education programmes for users/public	32	62	2	-	3.33	.474	Agreed
Creating a library web page for use	32	62	2	-	3.31	.509	Agreed
Provision of electronic access to library information resources	44	51	1	-	3.45	.521	Agreed
Requesting for users input before acquisition of library materials	35	53	5	3	3.25	.696	Agreed
Sending personal letters to users	45	42	4	5	3.32	.788	Agreed
Use of E-mail and text messages	49	43	2	2	3.45	.647	Agreed
One on one discussion with users	52	44	-	-	3.54	.501	Agreed
Advertising in print and electronic media in the study area	44	48	4	-	3.42	.574	Agreed
Use of librarians as friends of the library to reach out	42	54	-	-	3.44	.499	Agreed
Provision of suggestion boxes	45	49	2	-	3.45	.540	Agreed
Librarians proactive approach	41	55	-	-	3.43	.497	Agreed
Organizing library user sensitization week	41	51	4	-	3.39	.569	Agreed
Cluster Mean					**3.42**		

Table 2 shows the mean rating of the strategies of marketing university library information resources in Benue State. From the Table, item 25-39 shows that the

respondents agreed to the above strategies of marketing university library information resources in Benue State. This is because the mean scores of all the items are above the decision point of 2.50. Their ratings of items 25 to 39 are 3.68, 3.47, 3.35, 3.33, 3.31, 3.45, 3.25, 3.32, 3.45, 3.54, 3.42, 3.44, 3.45, 3.43 and 3.39 with corresponding standard deviations .513, .580, .632, .474, .509, .521, .696, .788, .647, .501, .574, .499, .540, .497 and .569 respectively. Based on the decision point, all the items are above the cut-off point of 2.50 and the cluster mean 3.42 which is above the cut-off point. This shows that above items are agreed to by the respondents as strategies of marketing university library information resources in Benue State.

The extent of use of university library information resources in universities in Benue State

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation of the Extent of Use of University Library Information Resources in Universities in Benue State

Extent of U	VHU	HU	LU	VLU	Mean	Std.	Remark
Textbooks are patronized by postgraduate Students	47	26	23	-	3.25	.821	Used
Journals are also patronized by postgraduate Students	33	25	36	2	2.93	.897	Used
Indexes are patronized by postgraduate Students	24	22	41	9	2.64	.964	Used
Abstracts are patronized by postgraduate students	21	32	35	8	2.69	.910	Used
Newspapers and magazines are patronized by postgraduate students	32	34	24	6	2.96	.917	Used
Reports are patronized by PG students	23	34	22	17	2.66	1.034	Used
CD-ROM databases are patronized by postgraduate students	21	47	14	14	2.78	.954	Used
Government document s are patronized by postgraduate students	21	32	10	33	2.48	1.176	Not Used
Encyclopedias are patronized by postgraduate students	24	47	21	4	2.95	.799	Used
Dictionaries are patronized by postgraduate students	25	44	19	8	2.90	.888	Used
Cluster Mean					**2.82**		**Used**

Table 3 shows the mean rating of the extent of use of university library information resources in universities in Benue State. From the Table, item 40-49 shows that the

respondents agreed to the above extent of use of university library information resources in universities in Benue State. This is because the mean scores of all the items are above the decision point of 2.50 except item 47 which is below the cut-off point of 2.50. Their ratings of items 40 to 49 are 33.35, 2.93, 2.64, 2.69, 2.96, 2.66, 2.78, 2.48, 2.95 and 2.90 with corresponding standard deviations .821, .897, .974, .910, .917, 1.034, .954, .1.176, .799 and .888 respectively. Based on the decision point, all the items are above the cut-off point of 2.50 and the cluster mean 2.82 which is above the cut-off point showing that the above items are agreed upon by the respondents.

Discussion

Findings on research question 1 which is on the purpose of marketing university library resources revealed that, the university market library resources to; promote the use of library information resources, create perception and thereby enhances demand for use, ensure optimal use of library information resources, improve the image of librarians, cope with the information explosion, introduce cutting-edge information technology systems in library services, save libraries from declining readership support, encourage patronage of use of the library information resources as well as to create awareness of the availability of library information resources. The result of this study is harmony with the findings of Madhusudhan (2012) and Arumuru (2023) asserted that the main reason for marketing library and information resources is to find out what the users of the product want, setting out and making plans on how to satisfy and meet these needs.

Findings on research question 2 revealed the strategies of marketing university library information resources. The strategies were revealed to include; exhibitions and display of new arrivals, use of leaflets and posters in public places/locations, sending out brochure or flyers to users/public, organizing user education programmes for users/public, creating a library web page for use, provision of electronic access to library information resources, requesting for users input before acquisition of library materials, sending personal letters to users, use of E-mail and text messages, one on one discussion with users, advertising in print and electronic media in the study area, use of librarians as friends of the library to reach out, provision of suggestion boxes, librarians proactive approach and organizing library user sensitization week. The result of this study is in affirmation with the findings of Ukwoma (2014) whose studied on strategies for marketing library services by library and information science (LIS) professionals in Nigeria identified good communication skills, face to face interaction with the user community, networking among professional colleagues, using bulletin boards, seminars and workshops, newsletters, publicity through advertisements and announcements, and through website as the major strategies for effective marketing of library and information services.

Result on research question 3 revealed the extent of use of university library information resources in universities in Benue State by post graduates. The result showed that textbooks, journals, indexes, abstracts, newspapers and magazines, reports, CD-ROM databases, Internet/E-mail, video tapes/cassettes, diskettes, magnetic disk,

computers, micro forms are to a great extent utilised. The result is in harmony with the findings of Joel, Nwafor-Orizu and Vandi (2020) who in their study on availability and extent of use of electronic information resources by postgraduate students in Federal University Libraries in North-East Nigeria revealed that PG students to a great extent make use of electronic information resources like CD-ROM, internet, WWW and e-mails. Also, Bashiraminu (2016) revealed that both print and nonprint library databases such as HINARI, AGORA, AJOL, and DOAJ were the types of library information resources utilized to a great extent in the Federal Colleges of Education Libraries in North Western State.

Conclusion

Information is a vital resource required by all individuals in order to succeed in their various endeavours, therefore providing effective and efficient information resources and services for post graduate students would be of less significant if there resources and services are not marketed to the intended users. Thus, marketing provides an opportunity for through which university library promote its invaluable resources. The study revealed that there is marketing policy in university libraries in Benue state with university library resources available for postgraduate students use. It also revealed that post graduate students in universities in Benue state are satisfied with the university library resources available. Consequently, it can be concluded that university libraries in Benue state are not lagging behind in marketing their university information resources for effective utilization despite the challenges of lack of manpower, lack of access to media for the purpose of marketing university library information resources.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, it is recommended that:

1. The University libraries should provide information resources such as knowledge and resource sharing and other information services which should be extended widely to the students to enable students utilize optimal use of the resources for their academic purposes.
2. University libraries should harness social media websites such as Facebook, Whatsapp and other social media platforms to market their library resources to postgraduates. This is because, majority of the students in the 21st century spent most of their time on social media and it will be easier to have their attention on it.
3. Provision of current and update to information resources and services for postgraduates to enhance use of the resources.

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